

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 050913Z MAY 78
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7477
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
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CINCUSNAVEUR
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0539

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PINS PBOR EAGR ELAB MP SE FR XO
SUBJECT: MAURITIUS WEEKLY REVIEW - MAY 5, 1978- SUMMARY

REF: PORT LOUIS 0512 (DTG 280930Z APR 78)
PORT LOUIS A-38,MAY 5, 1978

1. THE POLICE USED TEAR GAS TO BREAK UP A DEMONSTRATION BY WORKERS AT THE SOLITUDE SUGAR FACTORY WHO WERE CALLING ATTENTION TO THEIR DEMAND THAT THEIR JOBS BE PRESERVED IF THE FACTORY IS CLOSED. THIS OVER-REACTION BY THE POLICE WAS CRITICIZED BY THE PRESS AND BECAME A PRINCIPAL THEME AT THE RALLY STAGED BY THE OPPOSITION MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT (MMM) ON MAY DAY. THE LABOR PARTY'S MAY DAY RALLY WAS VERY POORLY ATTENDED. LABOR SPEAKERS CONTINUED TO ATTACK THE MMM FOR ALLEGEDLY ENCOURAGING FOREIGN INTERFERENCE
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IN MAURITIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS, FOR TRYING TO "DESTABILIZE" THE REGIME IN ORDER TO TAKE POWER BY FORCE, AND FOR SABOTAGING THE ECONOMY.

2. THIS WEEK'S ASSEMBLY SESSION WAS DESCRIBED BY THE PRESS AS "SERENE" FOLLOWING THE "STORMY" SESSIONS OF THE PAST FEW WEEKS. IN A NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW PLANNING MINISTER

GHURBURRUN, A LEADER OF THE LOWER CASTE HINDU ELECTORATE, CAME CLOSE TO CALLING ON RAMGOOLAM TO STEP DOWN AS PRIME MINISTER, THOUGH HE DID NOT SAY SO EXPLICITLY. BUT HE CONFIRMED THAT THE POPULACE IS DEMANDING CHANGE AND WANTS THE GOVERNMENT TO START GOVERNING.

3. ON HIS RETURN FROM THE SEYCHELLES CONFERENCE OF "PROGRESSIVE FORCES OF THE SOUTHWEST INDIAN OCEAN" MMM LEADER BERENGER CALLED IT A GREAT SUCCESS. IN A SEPARATE INTERVIEW HE PREDICTED THAT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WILL CAUSE THE FALL OF THE PRESENT MAURITIAN GOVERNMENT AND WILL BRING THE MMM TO POWER BEFORE THE NEXT ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR 1981.

4. MINISTER OF FISHERIES SEETARAM ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL SHORTLY PUBLISH A CHART DELINEATING ITS 200 MILE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE. THOUGH THE MINISTER WAS CONCILIATORY TOWARD NEIGHBORING STATES WHICH CONTEST SOME OF THE TERRITORY CLAIMED BY MAURITIUS, THERE IS LIKELY TO BE TROUBLE WITH FRANCE OVER THE MAURITIAN CLAIM TO TROMELIN ISLAND AND ITS ECONOMIC ZONE, AS WELL AS WITH THE SEYCHELLES OVER THE DISPUTED SAYA DE MALHA FISHING BANKS.

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